



Ruth Johnson
Oakland County Clerk/Register of Deeds

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December 8, 2009

The Honorable Kathy Angerer
Chairperson, House Ethics and Elections Comm.
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chair Angerer,

This Wednesday your committee is scheduled to meet to discuss House Bills 4539 and 4540 authorizing online voter registration. While I am unable to attend the meeting due to a conflict, I would like to express my opinion on a key provision in this bill that could curb thousands of bad registrations from occurring.

Important to this legislation are the provisions requiring the registration to be tied to an existing drivers license or state identification card and that those who do not meet that requirement must be treated like a mail-in registrant. This is an important safeguard to prevent fraud and would require those without identification to vote in-person in their first election. I strongly encourage your committee to leave these provisions in the bill.

With the safeguards contained in this bill, online voter registration would be more secure to protect against fraud better than some existing avenues for registration. This process would be the only one where election systems and the voter can immediately verify the registration is tied to a valid state identification. This could help prevent problems like the thousands of bad registrations that we saw in the last election.

Our elections system is antiquated and needs to catch up with modern technologies. Consider the attached excerpt from a Pew Center on the States report. It shows that in the 2008 election Michigan had 102.5% of the voting eligible population registered to vote. This indicates a problem that needs to be addressed if we are going to give the voters the confidence they deserve that our elections are fair and honest. This new technology tied to state identification could help keep our voter rolls up to date.

Thank you for considering this important bill and allowing me to add my voice in the discussion of HB 4539 and 4540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Johnson".

Ruth Johnson
Oakland County Clerk, Register of Deeds

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